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Education Committee Public Hearing
March 1, 2019

Vote No on HB-7150, AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATION INITIATIVES AND SERVICES IN CT

To: The Hon. Robert Sanchez, Co-Chair, The Hon. Douglas McCrory, Co-Chair, The Hon. Kathleen M. McCarty, Ranking Member, The Hon. Eric C. Berthel, Ranking Member, The Hon. Jill Barry, Vice Chair, The Hon. Mary Daugherty Abrams, Vice Chair, and members of the Education Committee

As the First Selectman of the Town of Voluntown, I am asking that all members of the Education Committee please vote in opposition to HB-7150, which accelerates the phase-in of changes to the Education Cost Sharing formula and shifts teachers' pension costs to towns.

HB 7150 significantly cuts ECS funding for Voluntown – a cut of \$316,019 in 19/20 and \$263,003 in 20/21. This is one of the severest cuts in the whole state based on the size of our education budget which was \$6,819,498. One MIL in Voluntown currently equals about \$200,000.

Combined with the proposal to shift teachers' pension costs to towns, the bill imposes a difficult burden on property taxpayers in our community. We urge lawmakers to reject these provisions, particularly given that towns have no control over pension benefits.

The proposed changes to the Minimum Budget Requirement included in the bill do not go far enough. The Minimum Budget Requirement should be removed so that towns and taxpayers have more control over the budget.

I also suggest that the state invest more money in Special Education or allow the Special Education funds to follow the student. This is the main reason why our school budget has been going up every year.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Tracey Hanson
First Selectman
Town of Voluntown